



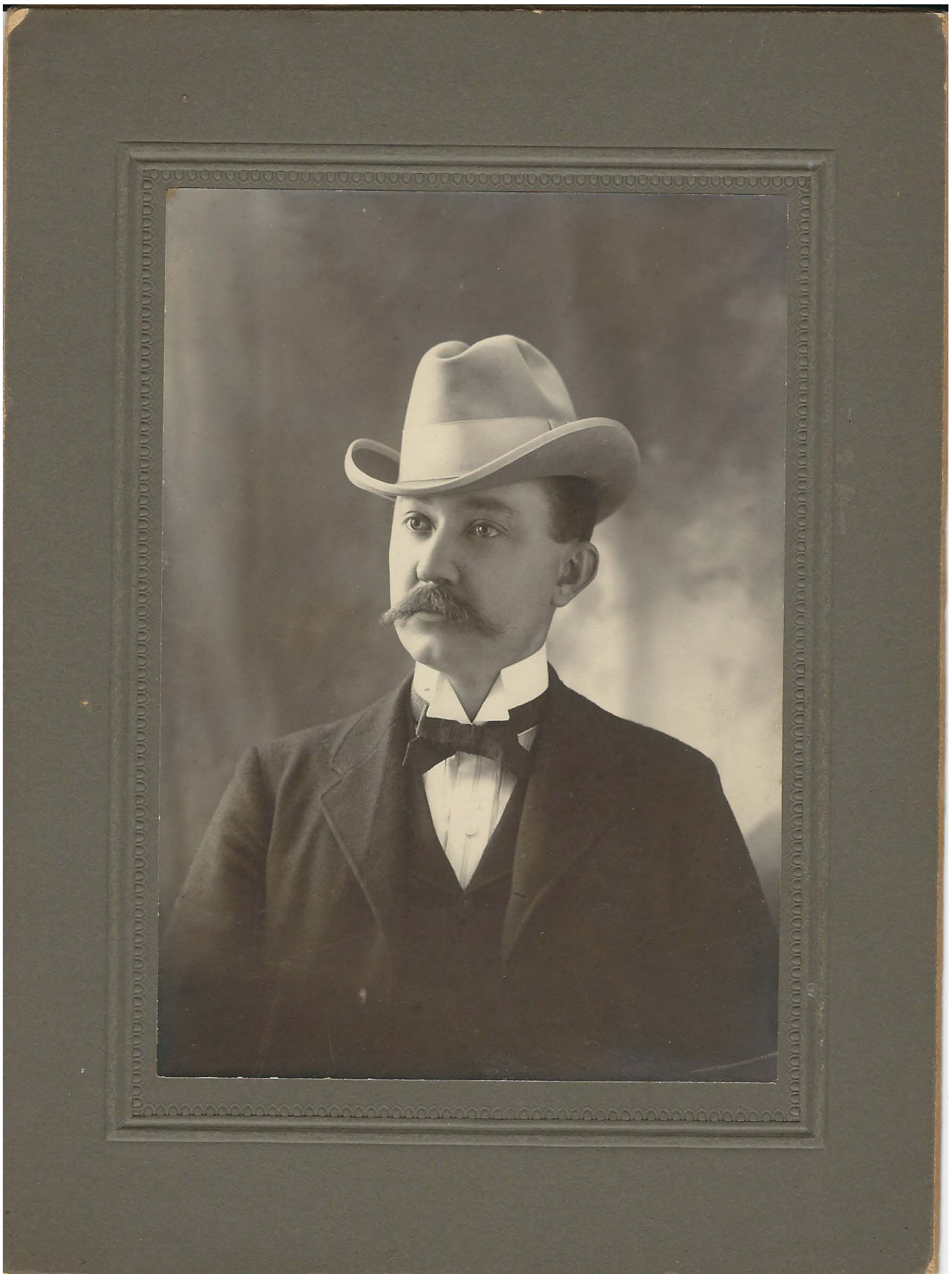
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J. C. Collier – From Merchant to Manufacturer

FEBRUARY 24, 2017 9:18 PM \ [2 COMMENTS](#) \ [BY COLLIERHERITAGE](#) \ [EDIT](#)



J. C. Collier - 1902

In 1897, 31-year old J. C. Collier was operating department stores in Barnesville and Thomaston,

Georgia. From an initial investment of \$1350, in only ten years he had built up the largest merchandising business in Georgia south of Atlanta. His net worth was over \$37,000.

Not one to let his energies or his money sit idle, in 1898, he and his father, I. C. Collier, formed Oxford Knitting Mills in Barnesville. The company was organized and the mill built with an initial investment of \$7500. J. C. Collier served as the company's President and his father, I. C. Collier, was Vice-President. F. Marvin Stephens (J. C. Collier's brother-in-law) was Treasurer and General Manager. Affordable Alabama coal, access to rail service, and a pool of dependable labor in an area where "Cotton was King" fueled the success of the mill. The mill specialized in men's knit undershirts.

I. C. Collier died on July 11, 1908. There is no evidence his vacated vice-president position was ever filled.

In June 1911, 21-year old Durward Cuthbert (D. C.) Collier, son of J. C., joined the company as Treasurer and General Manager. D. C. succeeded his uncle, F. Marvin Stephens, who had joined Marshall Field and Co.'s North Carolina Mills. D. C. was a 1911 graduate of Georgia Tech, finishing with a degree in textile engineering and receiving the National Association of Textile Manufacturers' gold medal for his academic excellence.



Also, in 1911, the company's name was changed from Oxford Knitting Mills to Collier Manufacturing Co., Inc.

Here is a picture of the mill in 1911.



1911

And another in 1912.



1912

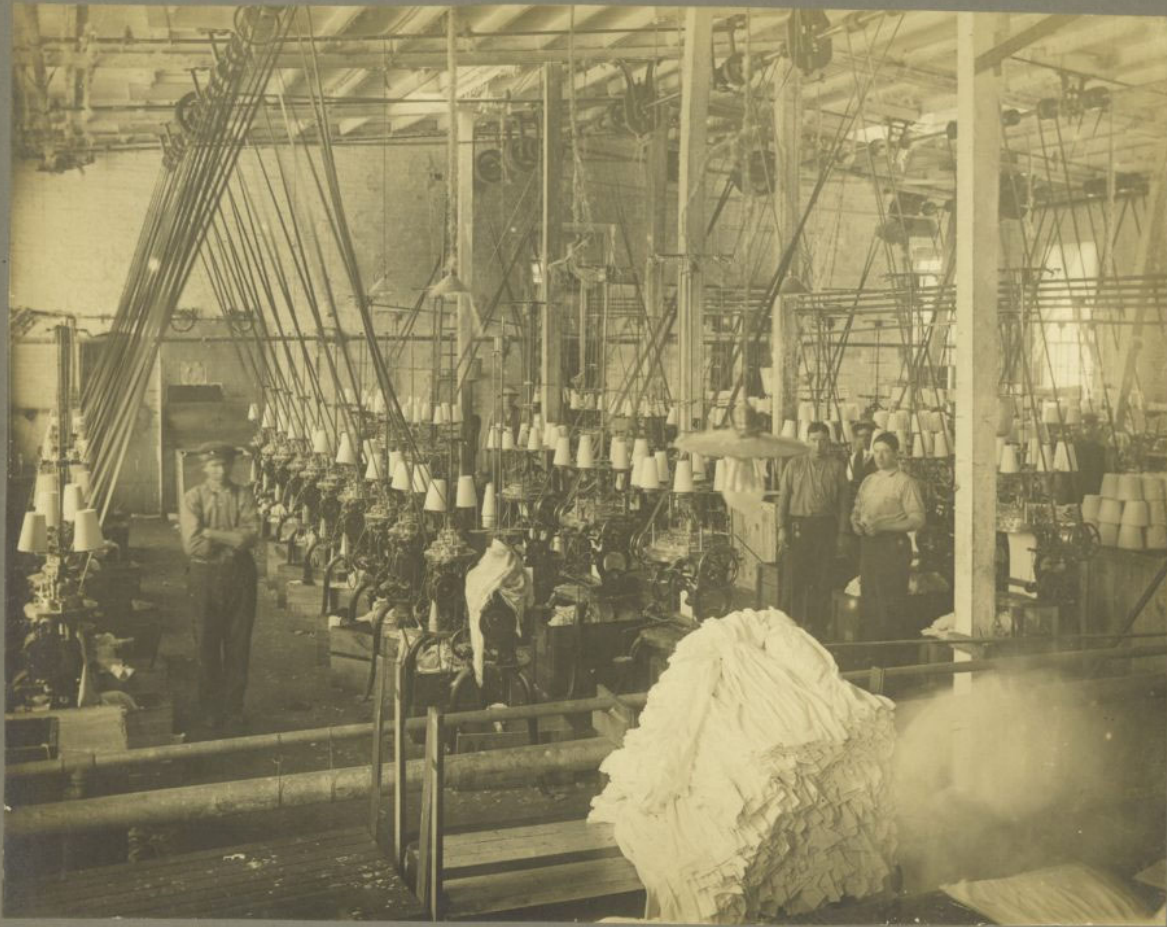


Portion of 1912 Photograph showing Name on Water Tank



This picture was probably taken between 1912 and 1920.

Here are some pictures of the inside the mill.



Spindles



Bleaching Area



Cutting Area



Seamstresses in the Mill



More Seamstresses



Packaging Area



Mill Management

In 1913, ladies' lightweight union suits (underwear) were added to the product offerings. The line of female garments resulted from a patent by D. C. and F. M. Murphy labeled "THE COLLIER CUT" (more to come later).

In early 1918, Collier Manufacturing, with its 20 years of experience in manufacturing knit underwear, was solicited by the U. S. government to make undershirts for the U. S. Army involved in World War I. The company installed the necessary equipment and began production. The effort was short-lived as the war ended later that year.

By 1920, Collier Manufacturing was operating six mills on a royalty basis. THE COLLIER CUT had received a Canadian patent and production was underway there.



Cardboard Store Sign

The name of the company was changed to Collier Mills, Inc. A new mill was added in Macon, Georgia to produce boys union suits. The market share became international, and a New York office was opened for selling and billing direct to the retailer. The mill in Barnesville, Georgia had a payroll of about 270 people in a town with a population of about 3,000.

In 1923, Collier Mills and the William Carter Co., of Needham Heights, Massachusetts, began discussions about a consolidation of the two firms on a 50-50 basis. In June 1923, Carter Collier Company was organized. The preferred stock in the new company was owned exclusively by J. C. Collier and D. C. Collier. On September 30, 1924, J. C. Collier and D. C. Collier sold their stock interest in the Collier Mills, Inc. and Carter Collier Co. at a premium to the William Carter Co., and ceased any further connection with the New England firm.

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2 Thoughts on “J. C. Collier – From Merchant to Manufacturer”



Linda Bennett

on [February 24, 2017 at 9:54 pm](#) said:

[Edit](#)

Great stuff! Thanks for your contribution.

Linda Bennett

[Reply↓](#)



Marsha Collier

on [January 13, 2018 at 4:10 pm](#) said:

[Edit](#)

Outstanding. Thanks to someone who kept all this info.

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